

**In the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the Application.

**Listing of Claims:**

Claims 1 - 21. (cancelled)

22. (New) A method of enabling a user to construct a target data storage system

the method comprising the steps of:

displaying a user interface to the user, the user interface connected to the target data storage system, the target data storage system a plurality of storage components, and one or more source data storage systems, each of the one or more source data storage systems comprising a plurality of storage components;

the user interface including a selector to enable the user to select one or more data storage components from the one or more source data storage systems for inclusion in the target data storage system;

merging the selected one or more source data storage components from the one or more source data storage systems into the target data storage system, including obtaining configuration characteristics and workload characteristics for the one or more data storage components from the one or more source data storage systems; wherein the workload characteristics comprise I/O operations comprising a number of read hits, read misses, least recently used writes, and write pending operations;

simulating performance of the target data storage system using one or more workloads to obtain utilization and performance information for the target storage system from the workload characteristics of each data storage system component of the one or more data storage components of the one or more source data storage systems; and

graphically representing the utilization or performance of each of the one or more data storage components of the one or more source data storage systems merged into the target data storage system and the data storage components in the target data storage system on the user interface to enable the user to visually determine whether the target data storage system meets a desired performance.

23. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the workload characteristics are obtained from a workload analyzer that analyzes the workload characteristics of the associated data storage component when executing in the source storage system in response to the one or more workloads.

24. (New) The method of claim 22, wherein the workload characteristics are input by the user.

25. (New) The method of 22 wherein the user consolidates the source data storage system by constructing the target data storage system to include fewer data storage components than the source data storage system.

26. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein the target data storage system includes data storage components of higher capacity than the source data storage system.

27. (New) The method of claim 26, wherein the target data storage system is configured to be load balanced in accordance with information yielded from the step of simulating performance on the target data storage systems.

28. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein a graphical representation of the utilization or performance on the user interface visually indicates whether to consolidate a plurality of data storage components of the source data storage system to fewer or newer data storage system components.

29. (New) A system for simulating and displaying performance or utilization information of a target data storage the data storage system includes:

a computer having a memory and a display;

computer-executable program code, operable when executed upon by a processor of the system to:

display a user interface on the display, the user interface connected to the target data storage system, to the target data storage system comprising a plurality of storage components, and one or more source data storage systems, each of the one or more data storage systems comprising one or more data storage components;

the user interface including a selector to enable a user to select a data storage component from the one or more source data storage systems for inclusion in the target data storage system;

merge the selected one or more source data storage component from the one or more data storage systems into the target data storage system, including obtaining configuration characteristics and workload characteristics for the one or more data storage components from the one or more source data storage systems; wherein the workload characteristics comprise I/O operations comprising a number of read hits, read misses, least recently used writes, and write pending operations;

simulate performance of the target data storage system using one or more workloads to obtain utilization and performance information for the target storage system from the workload characteristics of each data storage components; and

graphically represent the utilization or performance of each of the one or more data storage components of the one ore more source data storage systems merged into the target data storage system and the data storage components in the target data storage system on the user interface to enable the user to visually determine whether the target data storage system meets a desired performance.

30. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein the workload characteristics are obtained from a workload analyzer that analyzes the workload characteristics of the associated data storage component when executing in a source storage system in response to the one or more workloads.

31. (New) The system of claim 29 workload characteristics are input by the user.

32. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein the user consolidates a source data storage system by constructing the target data storage system to include fewer data storage components than the source data storage system.

32. (New) The system of claim 29, wherein the target data storage system includes data storage components of higher capacity than the source data storage system.

33. (New) The system of claim 32, wherein the target data storage system is configured to be load balanced in accordance with information yielded from the step of simulating performance on target data storage systems.

34. (New) The system of claim 33, wherein the target data storage system is configured to be optimized for performance in accordance with information yielded from the step of simulating performance on the target data storage systems.